

Chen

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE

December 10, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS *hhs*
ARNOLD NACHMANOFF *pat AKA*

SUBJECT: French Mirages for Israel

Chen
done
12/19

At Tab B is a [] message from Ambassador Shelton in Managua 25X1 stating that President Somoza had received a request from the Israeli government to act as middlemen in arranging the transfer of 50 Mirage fighters from France to Israel. Somoza would like to expedite the transfer and he implies he is acting with the knowledge and approval of the French government. He realizes that this is a delicate political issue and does not wish under any circumstances to complicate matters or jeopardize his relationship with the US. He is willing to abide by whatever suggestions the US may have.

As you know, the 50 Mirages have been held up in France ever since shortly after the 1967 war. We have always felt that it would be in the US interest to see them transferred to Israel because that would enhance Israel's aircraft inventory. While it might lessen somewhat the pressure on the US, the central point is that this would simply be a further way of assuring Israel's air strength. There seems to be no reason why the US should stand in the way of this.

Since we are not quite sure exactly how the French government may be involved, however, we think we should stand clear of any involvement in the transaction itself. You will recall what a storm the patrol boats raised when they were spirited from a European harbor to Israel.

Thus the appropriate response to Ambassador Shelton would seem to be simply to be to let Somoza know that (a) he would have to make his own judgments on his own involvement but (b) this would not complicate anything that we are doing.

Recommendation: That you approve the [] response to Ambassador 25X1
Shelton at Tab A.

State Dept. review completed

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

SECRET/SENSITIVE

12/20/71

SECRET/EYES ONLY

25X1

FROM: THE WHITE HOUSE
TO: Amembassy MANAGUA
FOR: AMBASSADOR SHELTON -- EYES ONLY
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*

In response to your message about the transfer of fighter aircraft from France to Israel, you should let President Somoza know that any judgments regarding his involvement in this transfer are his to make but that such a transfer would not repeat not complicate anything that the US is doing.' He should also know however that the Israelis know nothing of this proposal and have assured me in confidential channels that they do not give any credence whatsoever to it.

Warm regards.

SECRET/EYES ONLY

RECEIVED
WASA

TTDLA238

1971 DEC 2 18 20

25X1

ZNY BWSH
O 021810Z ZYH
FM MANAGUA
TO THE WHITE HOUSE
ZEM

S E C R E T 021735Z DE C 71
FM AMBASSADOR SHELTON, MANAGUA 001
TO THE WHITE HOUSE, FOR THE PRESIDENT

25X1

25X1

PRESIDENT SOMOZA OF NICARAGUA CONFIDED TO ME LATE EVENING 1 DECEMBER THAT HE HAS RECEIVED REQUEST FROM THE ISREALI GOVERNMENT TO ACT AS MIDDLEMAN IN ARRANGING TRANSFER FIFTY MIRAGE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FROM FRANCE TO ISREAL. HE INDICATED THAT THE FR ENCH GOVERNMENT WAS AGREEABLE AS LONG AS THEY NOT PUBLICLY INVOLVED. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHO PRECISELY INITIATED THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT SOMOZA, WHO HAS BEEN WORKING ON THIS ITEM FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS, STATES THAT HE IS INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN EXPEDITING THE TRANSFER OF THE AIRCRAFT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SUBJECT HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED THAT HE WOULD PARTICIPATE ONLY WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WHICH HE IMPLIES HAS NOW BEEN OBTAINED. THIS TOPIC HAS BEEN DORMANT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BUT NOW, WITH ISREALI PREMIER GOLDA MEIR VISITING WASHINGTON FOR WHAT PRESS REPORTS ARE CALLING "AIRCRAFT DISCUSSIONS" PRESIDENT SOMOZA WISHES TO ADVISE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OF HIS ACTIONS AND REQUESTS GUIDANCE ON HOW HE SHOULD PROCEED. SOMOZA REALIZES HE IS INVOLVED IN A DELICATE POLITICAL ISSUE AND DOES NOT WISH UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD COMPLICATE MATTERS OR JEOPARDIZE THE EXISTING FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP HE ENJOYS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE STATES HE IS WILLING TO ABIDE BY WHATEVER SUGGESTIONS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE IN THIS MAT TER. PLEASE ADVISE.

GP-1
310
#0083

NNNN

SECRET

SECRET

RECEIVED
WHCA

1971 DEC 8 17 52

DLA585

25X1

ZNY MMNSH
O 081743Z ZYH
FM MANAGUA
TO THE WHITE HOUSE

HICKS FOR HAK
HAI9

25X1

25X1

ZEM
SECRET 031730Z DEC 71
FM AMBASSADOR SHELTON, MANAGUA 002
TO THE WHITE HOUSE, FOR THE PRESIDENT

25X1

REF: MANAGUA 001 021730Z DEC 71

25X1

1. [REDACTED]
2. REGARDING REF MESSAGE DATED 2 DECEMBER 71, WOULD APPRECIATE
RESPONSE AS PRESIDENT SOMOZA HAS AGAIN ASKED FOR ADVICE ON THIS
SUBJECT. HE STATES THAT HE WISHES TO MAKE DECISION MOST FAVORABLE
TO U.S. INTERESTS OR TO WITHDRAW FROM ENTIRE AFFAIR. SOMOZA
INDICATES HE IS BEING PRESSED BY ISREALIS FOR REPLY.
GP-1
#1204

NNNN

SECRET

60000

Page Denied

Page Denied